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ABSTRACT

This article draws on data collected during a year-long ethnographic study of six Spanish-dominant English language learners, enrolled in both English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) and Spanish Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) "pull-out" programs, in an English kindergarten classroom. The study is based on a theoretical framework that conceptualizes language as the site of social meaning construction and power negotiations. It argues that a focus on effective second language instruction and language acquisition alone are inadequate for understanding and addressing complex learning environments and the needs of language learners. Four broad research questions address the local meanings of bilingualism, gender, and friendship, and how these ideologies, identities, and social relationships relevant to these socially- constructed discourses affect the Spanish-speaking students. Broad-, mid-, and micro-level analyses were conducted using standard interpretive analytic procedures. The study demonstrates how the meanings of these three local discourses and their inherent power dynamics shape students' identities, classroom participation, access to relationships, access to knowledge, and ultimately their investment in school. (Contains 86 references.) (Author/KFT)

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BILINGUALISM, GENDER, AND FRIENDSHIP: CONSTRUCTING SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN AN ENGLISH DOMINANT KINDERGARTEN

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ABSTRACT

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IN AN ENGLISH DOMINANT KINDERGARTEN

This article draws on data collected during a year-long ethnographic study of six Spanish dominant English language learners in an English kindergarten classroom. The study is based on a theoretical framework which conceptualizes language as the site of social meaning construction and power negotiations (Fairclough, 1989). It is argued that a focus on effective second language instruction and language acquisition alone are inadequate for understanding and addressing complex learning environments and the needs of language learners.

Four broad research questions address the local meanings of bilingualism, gender, and friendship and how the ideologies, identities, and social relationships relevant to these socially constructed discourses impact the Spanish speaking students. Broad, mid, and micro level analyses are conducted using standard interpretive analytic procedures. The study demonstrates how the meanings of these three local discourses and their inherent power dynamics shape students' identities, classroom participation, access to relationships, access to knowledge, and ultimately their investment in school.

BILINGUALISM, GENDER, AND FRIENDSHIP: CONSTRUCTING SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN AN ENGLISH DOMINANT KINDERGARTEN

Research in the field of second language acquisition has typically focused on linguistic, psycholinguistic, and sociolinguistic factors related to the development of individual language proficiency and effective instructional practices. Only recently has attention been drawn to the diverse social contexts in which language learners operate and the complex power dynamics which affect their identity construction and access to social interaction. This study is based on a theoretical framework of language and power which conceptualizes language as a site of social meaning construction and power negotiations (Fairclough, 1989). The data for this chapter are drawn from a year long ethnographic study in an English kindergarten classroom. Bilingualism, gender, and friendship were identified in the course of the study as salient discourses to the participants.

The article presents the theoretical orientation, description of the study site/population, and study design. This is followed by an in-depth presentation of three levels of analysis related to the construction and meaning of bilingualism, gender, and friendship. Discussion focuses on how the ideologies, identities, and relationships relevant to these socially constructed discourses impacted the second language learners. Implications include students' investment in language learning, school, and future academic pursuits. (For a more comprehensive account see Hruska, 1999.)

Theoretical Orientation and Broad Research Questions

Traditionally, literature in the field of second language acquisition has focused on the linguistic and cognitive processes of the individual in isolation rather than the interaction of the individual embedded within a social context (see Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991 for a review of this literature). When interaction has been considered, it is often conceptualized as a linguist resource, a site of linguistic input

and output to be utilized by the learner. Equal access to interaction is often assumed when students are in the same place at the same time. The limitation of this perspective is that it does not take into account the social meanings that are constructed during interaction, the power relationships which influence this meaning construction, the identities that are constructed as a result of the interaction, and the consequences for participants.

An alternative conceptualization of language interaction presented by Fairclough (1989) is one which considers language as the location for social meaning construction where ideologies, identities, and relationships are negotiated at local levels. Fairclough views language as dialectically related to society rather than as an isolated, independent linguistic system. He is particularly interested in the relationship of language, ideology, and power. Fairclough defines ideology as an "implicit philosophy" which governs practice and is often a taken for granted assumption linked to common sense. Ideologies associated with common sense often contribute to sustaining existing power relations and dominant discourses. When ideologies and related interactional routines are considered common sense, they become legitimated as the accepted way of conducting oneself and appear to lose their ideological character. This process of naturalization is in large part determined by who exercises power.

From this theoretical orientation, individual identities are not seen as existing separate from and outside society. Rather, identities are socially produced. People implicate their relationships and identities to each other and position each other through language. Positioning can affect not only the construction of identities but also who has access to which discourses. This socially oriented theory of language provides the foundation for asking questions about interaction in second language contexts that move beyond a strictly linguistic focus.

During the course of the study the discourses of bilingualism, gender, and friendship were identified as salient in shaping interaction at a local level. The following four questions guided data collection and analysis:

1. How are bilingualism, gender, and friendship constructed and displayed during interaction within a specific school and specific classroom context?

2. What are the ideologies, identities, and social relationships relevant to these constructions?

3. What are the meanings associated with these ideologies, identities, and social relationships to local participants?

4. What are the implications of these meanings for second language learners?

Study Site and Population

School and Programs

The setting for this study was a public elementary school in a New England college town. Access and consent to conduct the study were obtained without difficulty. Pseudonyms for the school, teachers, and students are used throughout the study with the exception of my own name.

The school, River Valley Elementary, had approximately 380 students grades K-6 in 18 self-contained classrooms. Historically, families in the River Valley school district have been white middle class. However, the school is now more socioeconomically, racially, and ethnically diverse. The ethnicity of the students as reported by the school district was 73% of European descent, 9% African, 6% Asian, 11% Hispanic and .2% Native American (terminology used in the report). Approximately 30-40 students at the school were dominant in a language other than English and required English as a second language (ESL) instruction.

About 20 of these students were Spanish dominant and voluntarily participated in the Spanish Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) program at the site. The program was voluntary and parents could withdraw their children at any time. Instruction was provided in Spanish so that students could continue to make

academic progress while there were learning English. The overriding goal of the TBE program was to transition students from native language instruction to an all English program .

Both the ESL and TBE classes at this site were "pull-out" programs which meant that all the children in the school were assigned to an English dominant homeroom where most native English speaking children spent the entire day. ESL and TBE students usually left, or were pulled out, of these classrooms for 45 minutes to 3 hours daily to attend ESL and TBE classes. The remainder of the day was spent in the English kindergarten classroom with English dominant peers.

Students

The study focused on six Spanish dominant students in an English kindergarten classroom. There were two girls, Susana and Claudia, and four boys, Dalbert, Felix, Hector, and Francisco. Four of the children were from Puerto Rico, one from El Salvador, and one from Mexico. Two were newly arrived, three had been here for a few years, and one had been born on the US mainland. Of the six, one planned to leave at the end of the year and three were uncertain. Some of these children's parents were not literate in their native Spanish and others were professionally proficient in Spanish and English. Thus, within the group of six there was diversity in terms of permanent status in the US, educational experience, class and country of origin.

Similarities were that all of the families were Spanish dominant and spoke Spanish at home. All six of these children were enrolled in the Spanish TBE program and were learning English at school. All of their parents had respect for the school and the teachers. And, for the most part, the children were involved with their families and extended families after school and on weekends, relying less on external relationships than their native English speaking classmates.

Teachers

There were four teachers directly involved in the study: the kindergarten teacher, the kindergarten aide, the Spanish TBE teacher and, myself, the ESL teacher. This report will focus primarily on the classroom teacher and classroom aide.

Mrs. Ryan, the kindergarten teacher, was a skilled and respected African American educator with over 20 years of experience at the primary level. She had graduate level training in multiculturalism and was committed to social justice. She was not a Spanish speaker, but was working on learning basic Spanish vocabulary. She had participated in a French immersion program when she was in elementary school.

Ms. Díaz, the Puerto Rican classroom aide, was specifically hired by Mrs. Ryan to support the Spanish dominant children in the classroom although she was expected to work with all of the students. She had both training and experience working with bilingual students and had previous experience as a kindergarten aide She was highly proficient in both English and Spanish. Ms. Díaz was in graduate school during the year of the study earning a degree in bilingual education.

Study Design

Data Collection

I had been the ESL teacher at this site for several years and was quite familiar with the school population, culture, and history. However, I gained a new perspective as I conducted research in classroom contexts that were less known to me since I had primarily taught in the self-contained ESL room. Thus, I had the benefits of both familiarity and newness as I engaged in the research. Prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation were utilized to ensure the credibility of the study.

The observations for the study spanned a period of one year exclusive of the previous pilot study year. I typically conducted one to three 20-45 minute observations daily and videotaped a minimum of two observations per week. Field notes, videotapes, audio taped teacher interviews, informal student interviews, seating charts, notes from parent conferences, notes from teachers' meetings, and documents were the data sources used in this study. This resulted in 830 pages of handwritten field notes, 40 hours of videotape, 4 hours of audio taped teacher interviews, 113 seating charts, and 17 classroom documents.

Having a variety of data allowed me to triangulate my findings by identifying repeating themes, confirming or negating hypotheses, and searching for negative cases across data sources. In addition to this triangulation of sources, there was a triangulation of roles. I approached the setting both as teacher and researcher. I was able to shift from being an observer, to a participant observer, to a complete participant. These varying roles afforded a variety of perspectives from which to collect data, some fully involved, others more removed. Multiple data sources and researcher roles brought a depth to data collection and analysis which enriched the interpretive process in addition to ensuring credibility.

Data Management and Data Analysis

Like data collection, data management and data analysis began on the first day of school and continued throughout the study. Data were reviewed regularly using standard ethnographic analytic techniques (Goetz & Le Compte, 1984, Patton, 1990; Spradley, 1980). Analytic memos were composed weekly and were reviewed at several points during the study. These memos served to identify patterns, themes, questions, and hypotheses. Initial analyses, related to the four broad research questions presented earlier, involved scanning and indexing the entire corpus of data several times. Data were categorized and organized according

to their relevance to the research questions. Selective coding was conducted on field notes, interviews, and videotaped data.

Considering issues of power based on Fairclough's theory of power and language (1989) required broad, mid and micro levels of analysis regarding the construction and meanings of bilingualism, gender, and friendship. For the purposes of microanalysis, twenty-five classroom events representative of whole class, small group, and free play activities were selected and transcribed (Erickson, 1992) according to their relevance to the broad research questions and the theoretical framework presented earlier. Approximately half of these transcripts were analyzed. The following 12 questions guided the microanalysis of classroom interaction and were systematically applied at the level of each person's turn during interaction:

1. What is the event (Erickson, 1992)?

2. What is the activity (Fairclough, 1989)?
   How was it initiated and by whom?

3. Who is present (Fairclough, 1989)?
   Who participates?
   Who does not?

4. What is the purpose (Fairclough, 1989)?
   Are there official and unofficial purposes/agendas?
   Are these purposes/agendas complimentary or conflicting?

5. What is the topic (Fairclough, 1989)?
   How was it initiated and by whom?
   Is it supported or ignored and by whom?

6. Which ideologies are being negotiated, validated, and contested (Fairclough, 1989)?

7. Which social identities are being negotiated, validated, and contested (Carbaugh, 1996; Fairclough, 1989; Lemke, 1995)?

8. Which social relationships are being negotiated, validated, and contested (Carbaugh, 1996; Fairclough, 1989)?

9. Which positions are being negotiated, validated, and contested (Carbaugh, 1996)?

10. Are bilingualism, friendship, and gender salient (Carbaugh, 1996)?
    When?
    How?

11. What are the meanings constructed for bilingualism, gender, and friendship across situations (Lemke, 1995)?

12. What are the implications for second language learners?

The resulting microanalysis took the form of a list of answers related to these questions and served as the basis for interpretations. Cross transcript comparison, second opinions, cultural informants, and alternative theoretical orientations were utilized in the interpretive process.

Meanings of Bilingualism, Gender, and Friendship

As previously mentioned, data analyses occurred at broad, mid, and micro levels. These included: 1) broad level analyses of the construction of bilingualism, gender, and friendship in the educational literature; 2) a mid-level analysis of local institutional and classroom ideologies and practices related to bilingualism, gender, and friendship; and 3) a microanalysis of classroom interaction which illustrates the construction and meanings of the three discourses in a kindergarten classroom. Summaries of each of these levels will be presented next for the three discourses of bilingualism, gender and friendship.

Bilingualism

Broad Level Analysis: Bilingualism Literaure

A review of educational literature regarding bilingualism and bilingual education in the United States reveals a history of contention among various sociopolitical factions. These power negotiations have shaped the meanings of bilingualism as well as the ebb and flow of bilingual education.

Bilingualism is not simply an individual trait related to multiple language proficiency, but is also a socially constructed concept situated in historical, political, and educational contexts which takes on diverse meanings in local communities (Glick, 1987). It has been conceptualized alternately as a benefit and a handicap, depending on the historical and political climates and the population in question.

Early research on bilingualism in the United States centered on the relationship between bilingualism and intelligence (Crawford, 1989; Edwards, 1994; Hakuta, 1986). These studies in the early 1900s were conducted primarily on immigrant populations and concluded that there were detrimental cognitive, emotional, and psychological effects of speaking more than one language. Not coincidentally, this early research was tied to an attempt to stem the flow of immigrants into the country which peaked during this period.

A different picture of bilingualism was painted in Canada during the 1960s when there was increasing political pressure to create status for French and French speaking Canadians (Peal & Lambert, 1962). Bilingualism was shown to foster greater "cognitive flexibility" and bilingual individuals were rated as superior on certain verbal measures.

The current public discourse on bilingual education in the United States is divided roughly into two contingents, those who favor native language instruction and those who advocate for all-English programs. Each side claims that their instructional practices are in the best interests of students. Both cite literature to support their positions and critique research that endorses the opposing view. Each contingent is politically active in creating legislation to strengthen its agenda in the public schools while accusing the other side of having a hidden political agenda of an unsavory nature. Each side favors some program models and types over others. A brief review of the basic tenets of each argument in presented followed by their relevance to the study site.

Many English-only advocates believe that bilingual education programs discriminate against second language learners by giving them separate but unequal instruction and that these students have a right to the same instruction as children in English grade level programs. They believe that bilingual programs do not provide equal access to education and actually put students at a disadvantage (Baker & de

Kanter, 1983; Birman & Ginsburg, 1983; Porter, 1990, 1996; Rossell & Baker, 1996). Bilingual programs, they claim, are expensive, unnecessary, and ineffective (Carpenter, Huffman, & Samulson, 1983; Glenn, 1996; Porter, 1990; Rossell & Baker, 1996). They assert that students in bilingual programs do not learn English, do make made adequate academic progress, and are segregated from English speaking peers. As a result they become discouraged and drop out of school (Baker & de Kanter, 1983). More "time on task" (Porter, 1990), or time spent learning in English, rather than the native language is recommended to speed English acquisition. English as a second language classes and immersion programs are proposed as an alternative to bilingual education. Many English-only advocates are not against bilingualism per se, but do not support the extensive use of native language instruction for English learners in the public schools.

Bilingual education advocates frame their arguments as an issue of educational equity. They view native language instruction as a matter of civil rights because it is the only guarantee that children will be provided with instruction in a language they can understand-equal not being the same as equitable. Providing bilingual students equal, or the *same*, instruction as native English speakers, they assert, does not meet these students' needs. Without native language instruction children are being denied access to an equitable education and may be doomed to failure (Dicker, 1996; Nieto, 1986, 1992). Bilingual advocates claim that well-run bilingual programs can increase student motivation and achievement, reducing drop-out rates (Cummins, 1996; Dicker, 1996; Frau-Ramos & Nieto, 1993).

Learning English and developing academic competence in English is the goal of good bilingual programs. But, rather than eliminating students' first languages, bilingual advocates conceptualize these languages as assets and resources to be developed which are valuable in the process of learning English and beyond (Cummins, 1994; Flores et al., 1991; Lam, 1993; Nieto, 1992, 1999;

Secada, 1990). Sometimes separating students is necessary, they point out, in order to group them and provide native language instruction and should be respected. Integration with native English speakers is encouraged and supported (Nieto, 1992). Learning to read, write, think, and perform in the language that the students know best are all skills that can be readily transferred to English, they argue, as the student gains a more sophisticated academic proficiency in English.

Those in favor of bilingual education promote multilingualism and multiculturalism over monolingualism and monoculturalism. They cite the cognitive, social, emotional, personal, and national advantages of multilingual proficiency and cultural diversity in an increasingly complex and pluralistic world. They do not deny the political nature of bilingual education asserting that it is not simply an issue of language. They understand that such programs have the potential to empower disenfranchised groups and threaten the status quo (Macedo, 1985; Nieto, 1992).

The debate over bilingual education, as illustrated by these two discourses, is not simply about native language instruction and language use, but is sociopolitical in nature (Crawford, 1989; Cummins, 1996; Glick, 1987; Milon, 1996; Nieto, 1992). It is about power relations. These power relations, their underlying ideologies, and related educational practices shape the meaning of bilingualism in specific contexts. The English-only discourse is representative of a mainstream perspective in the United States, one which reflects a largely white, monolingual, English speaking population. The bilingual position, which challenges the dominant discourse, is often more strongly supported by minority populations and academic institutions. Bilingual advocates in the state focus on strengthening existing laws in support of bilingual education while English-only advocates work to steadily erode them.

Mid-level Analysis: Local Ideologies, Meanings, and Practices

Evidence of these broad social discourses was apparent at the study site and surrounding community. At the time of the study, school districts in the state were required by law to offer Transitional Bilingual Education programs when there were 20 or more students of one language group at the district level. While TBE programs provide temporary native language support, they do not aim to produce academically proficient bilingual students nor maintain native language proficiency. The transitional nature of such programs prioritizes English proficiency over bilingual proficiency.

At the local district and school level, the meanings of bilingualism were also shaped by these two ideological discourses. Argument for one side or the other could be heard during School Committee meetings when funding for bilingual programs was being discussed, during all school meetings where issues related to bilingual children were raised, and in individual classrooms where children were engaged in day-to-day interaction with peers and adults. Because the community and school were English dominant, the support of bilingual education remained the minority view. The staff was primarily English dominant with anywhere from 5-7 native Spanish speaking adults out of a staff of 50. Classroom teachers at the school were all English dominant, a few having some second language proficiency. There were a handful of teachers with training in bilingual education or second language acquisition. With no common base of understanding and commitment at a building level the school did not greatly value or promote the students' bilingualism and multiculturalism though there were attempts by individual teachers to do so.

Mrs. Ryan, the kindergarten classroom teacher, for example, demonstrated a deep commitment to multiculturalism, social justice, and social change which was shaped by her own experience as a African American woman. Her ideology of bilingualism was closely related to her ideology of multiculturalism which

emphasized valuing diversity and respecting all people, their cultures, and languages. She was also aware of the dominant local discourse which did not value bilingualism. Mrs. Ryan found herself in the position of trying to support and celebrate linguistic and cultural diversity in an environment that was lukewarm toward these issues. She worked diligently with her Spanish bilingual aide, Ms. Díaz, to create a classroom environment where all of her students were heard, valued, and affirmed.

Of the 23 students in the class six spoke Spanish as their first language, one spoke Russian, and one had exposure to several Native American Indian languages in addition to English. The remainder of the class was English monolingual. For many of the monolingual children, being exposed to a second language in kindergarten was a new experience. Most of the bilingual children on the other hand had been to an English speaking preschool or had some exposure to English prior to attending kindergarten.

The Spanish bilingual children demonstrated no hesitation in learning and speaking English as the dominant language in the school and the classroom. They were all willing to tolerate a certain level of ambiguity in English and rarely interrupted whole class discussions to request translation or clarification in Spanish if it was not provided. They did sometimes request private help in Spanish from Ms. Díaz during work times. The Spanish dominant children spoke Spanish amongst themselves on occasion but more frequently conversed in English when they were in the kindergarten classroom, even with each other. They spoke English with their grade level peers and never attempted to teach them Spanish.

The English dominant children were encouraged, but not expected, to learn Spanish. The kindergarten program was not a bilingual or two-way program. The Spanish instruction that occurred was due to Mrs. Ryan's and Ms. Díaz's efforts to value Spanish. Basic Spanish vocabulary such as colors, numbers, and days of the

week was incorporated into daily routines and lessons. The children's use of Spanish was primarily limited to a display of knowledge for teachers during whole class events since being able to produce Spanish words and phrases was highly praised by adults in these circumstances. Some English speakers felt free to pipe up any time Spanish was spoken or read to them and request the English translation immediately. Unlike the Spanish bilingual students, they did not expect ambiguity and had less tolerance for it. The English dominant children never made negative or derogatory remarks about the Spanish dominant children. They were open to learning some Spanish and sat quietly, at Mrs. Ryan's insistence, through Spanish translation. But overall, they did not appear to see any personal benefit to knowing Spanish or associating with Spanish speakers and made no special effort in these areas when not prompted by an adult.

Micro-level: Classroom Interaction

In the following discussion from mid-October Mrs. Ryan can be seen constructing a positive meaning for bilingualism and status for the bilingual speakers. The children's reaction to this discussion is very interesting.

During the regular class morning meeting John asked a question about sign language which led Mrs. Ryan to discuss languages in the classroom. She worked very hard during this discussion, with the support of the other adults in the classroom, toward a positive construction of bilingualism. By this time of the year, she had already focused extensively on Spanish since it was the first language of six of the children and the kindergarten aide. In this discussion she was focused on identifying Kenny, the Indian (family choice of terminology rather than American Indian or Native American) child who was English dominant but was also exposed to several Indian languages. Below are several excerpts from this lengthy discussion:

1 Mrs. Ryan: You know what I was thinking last night? John, I'm so glad you brought up language (sign language). Remember we were talking about the languages we're learning in this classroom? And we said we were learning English and . . .

2 Class: Spanish.

3 Mrs. Ryan: . . . Spanish and Russian. Do you know there is a person sitting here on the floor, that's a clue, so you know it's not me, it's not Mrs. Clark, it's not Ms. Nico, it's not Anna. There is somebody who is sitting on the floor right now who speaks another language at *his* house. Did I give you a clue? This person hasn't told us what language he speaks. But he does speak another language. I wonder if he will tell us what language he speaks at home. Do you see someone smiling?

The children began to guess the names of different boys in the classroom. No one claimed to be the person she had in mind and Kenny did not identify himself. The right child was mentioned at one point but this was not acknowledged and the guessing continued. In turn 24 below, Philip guessed that is was Dalbert, one of the Spanish bilingual children:

24 Philip: I think it's Dalbert.

25 Mrs. Ryan: Dalbert, what language do you speak at home?

(Dalbert covers his face with a paper.)

26 Mrs. Ryan: English . . .

(Dalbert nods.)

27 Mrs. Ryan: . . . and what?

28 Dalbert: Spanish.

29 Mrs. Ryan: English and Spanish. Is it Dalbert?

30 Class: No.

While Mrs. Ryan was working toward a positive construction of multilingualism, the children who actually did speak a language other than English at home were not entirely convinced of its merits at this point. Indicating that even as five year olds in kindergarten, they were aware of the discourse of bilingualism that was operating in the local context. When Dalbert was identified as a possible candidate, he did not respond right away. Mrs. Ryan prompted him in turns 26 and

27 by mentioning English first and then eliciting from him that he also spoke Spanish at home. Dalbert, a social, gregarious child with a good command of English, appeared somewhat uncomfortable by this admission. He lowered his head, hid his face behind a piece of paper he was holding, and answered quietly. As a native Spanish speaker in an English dominant environment he may have already become sensitive to the meanings and low status attached to Spanish in the local community in spite of his teacher's current efforts. It was also likely that he was aware that although the adults were constructing a positive and desirable meaning for bilingualism, his peer group was less supportive.

The guessing game continued but with a new twist. Children who were not bilingual began to claim that they were:

46 Mrs. Ryan: Who do you think it is?

47 Alan: It's Mark!

48 Mrs. Ryan: Mark, what languages do you speak at home?

49 Mark: I sp . . . I learned a little Span . . . French but I don't speak it often, but sometimes I do say French.

50 Mrs. Ryan: So now we have French too and . . .

[Turns 51-73 not included]

74 Mrs. Ryan: Hmmmm. Philip, what languages do you speak at home?

75 Philip: English and Spanish.

76 Mrs. Ryan: English and Spanish, a little Spanish. How about the birthday coming up guy? Judd, what languages do you speak at home?

77 Judd: English and Spanish.

78 Mrs. Ryan: English and Spanish. It's got to be either . . . Hey John, could it be you? What languages do you speak at home?

79 John: Sign language, sign language, and um, Spanish.

None of the previous four native English speaking boys could speak the languages they claimed to, nor were they actually spoken at home. But, they had realized that based on how Mrs. Ryan was constructing the conversation, the only

way to have access to the discussion and gain status was to claim that they could. They had never actually had the experience of speaking a minority language in a dominant culture and had little to lose in their eyes by making such claims. They were willing to become involved with Mrs. Ryan's public construction of bilingualism when they could gain status by doing so, but rarely pursued the topic in their peer group or used Spanish for communicative purposes. Within their peer group bilingualism was not constructed as necessary or advantageous.

And, because it was primarily boys that were contributing to the conversation, they also initiated a competitive discourse (typical of the boys' interaction) which engaged other boys to claim that they were as capable in the linguistic arena as their peers. Unlike the boys who claimed to speak another language, Kenny, like Dalbert, who really was multilingual and had experience with multilingualism outside of this discussion, was not so sure he wanted to announce it and remained silent while the children were guessing his identity. It is also quite possible that their caution was not limited simply to speaking a language other than English, but that they had experience being racially, ethnically, and culturally different from the mainstream population. Language alone may not have been the issue. When Mrs. Ryan finally identified Kenny in turn 83, he was initially reticent:

> 83 Mrs. Ryan: Well, let me just see. I'm at the last person here. Let's see. He is sitting on the floor. If you say he . . . . Kenny, what language do you speak at home? Do you know?
>
> (Kenny nods his head, yes.)
>
> 84 Mrs. Ryan: Tell me Kenny.
>
> 85 Kenny: No.
>
> 86 Mrs. Ryan: See, he doesn't want to tell us yet but all I can tell you is . . .

Kenny then relented in turn 88 and stated that he was multilingual but was still cautious about naming the Indian languages and fell back on the language he

knew had been celebrated to some extent in the classroom and claimed by the other boys:

88 Kenny: I speak five languages.

89 Mrs. Ryan: Yes, he does.

90 Ms. Díaz: Wow!

91 Mrs. Ryan: He speaks five languages at home! You did not know that about Kenny did you? You speak English, what other, give us one of the other languages, Kenny.

92 Susana: And me speak five.

93 Mrs. Ryan: Just a minute. It's Kenny's turn to talk.

94 Mark: I though I knew about it, you know why? He is an American Indian!

95 Kenny: No, not, I'm not American, you're wrong.

96 Mrs. Ryan: Tell us Kenny, say the right thing. What would you like us to know, Kenny? You speak English and what other, give us one of the other languages, Kenny.

97 Kenny: Spanish.

Mrs. Ryan, in turns 89 and 91, and Ms. Díaz, in turn 90, were both constructing Kenny's multilingual abilities as prestigious and he does eventually admit to multilingual skills. When Mark claimed that he had known the identity of the mystery child and called him an American Indian (knowledge display was a common behavior among the boys in the classroom), Kenny objected as the family used the term Indian. But he was still reticent to name one of the Indian languages and instead fell back on Spanish, a language he did not speak. Perhaps he felt that Spanish had more prestige in this situation than the Indian languages he spoke with his family.

In turn 92, Susana indicated that she understood the construction of bilingualism that Mrs. Ryan was trying to create and joined the conversation by claiming that she, too, could speak five languages. This is the discourse that some of the monolingual children had been constructing, claiming that they had greater language proficiency than they actually did in order to gain status. It is interesting

that Susana, a native Spanish speaker who was newly arrived in the United States, was willing to make this claim when Dalbert, who had lived on the U.S. mainland for all of his life had been reluctant to admit he spoke Spanish at the beginning of the discussion. Unlike Susana, he may have been more aware of the discourse that existed outside the classroom which did not value bilingualism. He, therefore, was less willing to try to gain status by aggrandizing his language abilities as the native speakers did. They had something to gain, he didn't, reminiscent of the double standard applied to bilingualism in the US.

Summary: Construction of Bilingualism

The complexities of both the broad and immediate contexts shaped the local construction of bilingualism and identities of bilingual children. Dominant public discourse about the value of bilingualism, the resulting policies and programs, teacher and student ideologies, historical circumstances, and the status of individual languages, all contributed to the meaning that was constructed for bilingualism. This in turn affected how children were positioned in specific settings and the identities they could assume.

In spite of adult efforts, bilingualism and the identity of being bilingual, had no particular advantage or status for native Spanish speakers in this setting. There was a certain degree of status available in adult led situations, but this did not carry over into the peer group. It is quite possible that due to the ceaseless efforts of the classroom teacher and classroom aide, the construction of bilingualism in this kindergarten may have been more positive than it would have been without their intervention. Ms. Díaz reported that the interaction between the Spanish bilingual and English dominant children in this kindergarten classroom was significantly better than in other classrooms where she had worked. In spite of this, being bilingual was viewed by very few native speakers in the classroom or the school as a desired outcome. In other settings where multilingualism is the norm or held in

high-esteem, the meaning of bilingualism and the identities and status available to second language learners might be significantly different.

Another feature of the previous transcript is that it was primarily boys who were contributing to the conversation. Male dominated public discourse was typical in this classroom and across the school (Hruska, 1995). This particular discussion may also have been influenced by the fact that the class was engaged in trying to identify the male "mystery" child, which might have prompted more boys to participate. Boys tended to build on conversations by and about boys. The competitive discourse that the boys initiated and the public nature of this interaction may have discouraged girls from contributing illustrating how gender impacted classroom interaction. The gender discourse as it was constructed at this site will be described in the next section.

Gender

Broad Level Analysis: Gender Literature

In the early 1970s there was a surge of interest in gender studies inspired, in part, by the feminist political movement which drew widespread attention to issues of power, social relationships, and inequalities between women and men. Evidence of this interest was research across disciplines including psychology, anthropology, sociology, linguistics, and education. Initial work was often aimed at refuting the view that male language and behavior were the norm and efforts were made to restore women to both theoretical and practical domains.

During the 1970s and early 1980s researchers focused on the developmental origins and documentation of sex differences and produced a veritable ocean of literature. From this perspective, gender development and gender differences are typically accounted for through biological (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974, 1980) or socialization theories (Adler et al., 1992; Eisenhart & Holland, 1983). These theories accepted gender differences as developmental and typical. It soon became

apparent, however, that gender viewed as a behavior tied to biology or individual development provided only a limited perspective, as gender behaviors were not predictable nor universal across contexts (Halpern, 1986; Hyde, 1984, 1990; Hyde et al., 1990; Hyde & Linn, 1988).

Some current conceptualizations of gender interaction and gender related research go beyond this original dichotomization of unitary traits and focus on the social construction of gender as a cultural practice in specific contexts influenced by power (Connell, 1987; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992; Kessler & McKenna, 1978; Measor & Sikes, 1992; West & Zimmerman, 1991). From this perspective, individuals are not seen as the site of gender development, but rather as active participants in the joint process of "doing gender" which is an ongoing verbal and non-verbal activity embedded in everyday interaction (West & Zimmerman, 1991). Gender, like bilingualism, is not considered simply as an individual trait, but as a construction among individuals in local communities. People position themselves and others by using the attribution of gender to construct social hierarchies which reproduce gender relations in distinct ways (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992).

The practice of doing gender is seen by some as unavoidable due to current social and political allocations of power and resources which become institutionalized (West & Zimmerman, 1991). Gender meanings permeate interaction. There are different ways of structuring gender which reflect social interests that can be accepted or contested but are not homogenous across cultures and contexts. Gender may have a different level of salience in different situations rather than universal predictability (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992).

Gender, from this perspective, is also historical and does not have a "fixed essence" (Flax, 1987). As with bilingualism, changes in gender understandings are produced by human practice (Connell, 1987). What is considered "normal" or "natural" gender behaviors change over time and are shaped by political and

economic forces. Sexist practices continue to exist and be reproduced because they benefit social factions that hold power.

Mid-level Analysis: Local Ideologies, Meanings, and Practices

Unlike the local bilingual discourse which was influenced by laws and specific programs, the gender discourse in the River Valley community was more naturalized and less visible in day-to-day affairs. Gender was not perceived to be a problem in most settings and did not draw special attention under most circumstances. However, like the identities that were being constructed around bilingualism, there were also identities that were constructed around gender that impacted students' access to status, to interaction, and ultimately to equal participation in educational institutions. Although the local community was considered progressive, the gender discourse in many ways reflected the wider gender inequities of the culture at large. Research released by Sadker and Sadker (1994), the American Association of University Women (1992, 1999), and Brown and Gilligan (1992) indicates that there are serious consequences that result from the dominant gender discourse.

While both the state and the local school district claimed they did not discriminate on the basis of gender, there was little overt attention given to the issue. In administration men predominated while teachers were primarily women, especially at the elementary level. There was only one recently developed social studies unit at the elementary level which considered gender issues. This was part of a civil rights unit which reviewed women's struggle for the vote. In the past 10 years there had been no mandatory inservice training on gender interaction, gender inequity, nor formal discussion of this type at the study site.

Mrs. Ryan believed that gender stereotypes negatively affected all the children, limiting both boys and girls and restricting their options. At times she would address gender directly by specifically discussing issues in terms of girls and

boys. More often she dealt with it indirectly by randomly pairing children which resulted in cross-gender pairs, assigning children to gender integrated tables and work teams, making sure that instructional groups were gender integrated, drawing girls into whole class conversations, alternately calling on girls and boys, and presenting materials and curriculum that were gender equitable. She also commented on both girls' and boys' clothing and girls' and boys' haircuts. She never did things such as refer to the class as "Girls and Boys," line children up by gender, or use gender in any way to create separate groups. Like any teacher, however, Mrs. Ryan did not have total control of what children thought, said, and did at school to any great degree. And, it was often the children who brought issues such as gender to the surface in very traditional ways.

Micro Level: Classroom Interaction

The children demonstrated one aspect of their gender ideology the first day of school. When they entered the classroom and sat down on the floor, they arranged themselves in a circle which was neatly divided down the middle with girls seated in one half, boys in the other. With very few exceptions, this pattern persisted during the first few days of school until Mrs. Ryan intervened. Without teacher intervention the children inevitably segregated themselves by gender. Sometimes this segregation resulted in two groups, other times in several smaller gender segregated groupings.

Sometimes Mrs. Ryan directly addressed their tendency to gender segregate and asked them to move and self-integrate. One morning, after such an episode, she pursued the topic further by trying to dispel the notion of gender segregation at school. She was working toward asserting that the only place where she condoned such behavior was the bathrooms which were clearly marked "Girls" and "Boys" :

11 Mrs. Ryan: Who knows one place that girls go, and boys go to another place?

12 Kenny: They (girls) can't climb trees.

Kenny's response in turn 12 was not what Mrs. Ryan was expecting, of course, but served to display the boys' gender ideology and named one of the gender segregated recess activities. It was comments like these that Mrs. Ryan could not control when she elicited children's responses. Although she countered this remark below, it was still heard by all and may have served to confirm the children's beliefs rather than challenge them:

> 13 Mrs. Ryan: Are there any girls that can climb trees?
>
> (Girls raise their hands.)
>
> 14 Mrs. Ryan: I guess girls can climb trees. Think of something else.
>
> 15 Alan: The bathrooms.
>
> 16 Mrs. Ryan: Only the bathrooms. When you hear someone say, "Girls can't do this! Boys can't do this!" say, "Yes, we can!" Every morning we are going to check the circle. It's good when different people sit next to each other.

It was fortunate for Mrs. Ryan that when she asked the girls if they could climb trees, they produced a positive response. She would have been at the mercy of the children's beliefs and practices if the girls had only confirmed the boys' prejudices that girls are unable to climb trees. She faced this situation one day when she attempted to engage the girls in a male dominated class discussion about soccer that the boys had initiated. Few of the girls had experience playing soccer and those that did had quit. This made it difficult for her to convince her students that soccer was an equal opportunity sport. It also made it difficult to draw the girls into the conversation. In attempting to broaden the children's gender beliefs she was often constrained by their current gender practices.

Gender was salient in where children chose to physically locate themselves as in the morning circle. It was also highly significant in their relationship choices and their interactions in the classroom. Children overwhelmingly chose same-gender friends within the classroom setting. While several same-gender friendships persisted the length of the year, none of the cross-gender relationships were long-

lived. Possibly because the gender norms that were constructed in the classroom discouraged such alliances,

The gender segregation in children's friendships resulted in gender segregated free choice activities. During indoor and outdoor free play, the children were allowed to chose what to do and where to go. Only a few activities were strongly gender associated: building blocks, soccer, and climbing trees for the boys; housekeeping and fantasy play for the girls. But, because the children tended to make selections with their same-gender friends, they also tended to congregate in same-gender groups during free choice times resulting in primarily same-gender interaction.

Another area where the children's gender ideology was apparent was in girls' and boys' verbal discourse. While there was much overlap in girls' and boys' talk, there were also some areas that were more distinct. The girls, for example, would talk about and accuse each other of romantic liaisons. They seemed fascinated by conversations about who was going to marry whom even though this talk was discouraged by teachers. It was girls who initiated flirting type encounters with boys.

The boys did not initiate this type of interaction but were much more likely to construct a competitive discourse--who could kick the highest goal, had the coolest dinosaur book, or had the most racing cars. Claims such as, "I know! I know!" and "I knew it before you even said it!" reflected knowledge. "I can read an eighth grader book," demonstrated ability. Statements of ownership and quantity, "I have 10 of those at home," were also popular among the boys.

The boys' competitive discourse, unlike the girls' romantic discourse, was not limited to private conversation but permeated whole class public discussions where status could be established and heard by all. It was also demonstrated in the

boys' greater participation in whole class discussions in general, both through calling out and being recognized by the teacher.

Sometimes children also initiated cross-gender interaction for the explicit purposes of constructing and highlighting gender categories. Often this was initiated by boys who were intent on constructing themselves as superior to the girls. One such interaction occurred during the second week of school while the children were in the hallway coloring large murals of whales. Kenny, who was working with a small group of boys, walked over to a mural being completed by a group of girls nearby:

> 1 Kenny: This is uglier than ours. (He walks on top of the girls' whale in his sock feet.) Dumb whale. Do you know what our whale is? A killer whale.
>
> 2 Jenny: This is a baby beluga.
>
> 3 John: We don't make baby whales.
>
> 4 Jenny: It's a mama whale.
>
> 5 Alan: Ours is definitely better. I know where spouts go and all these things are used to kill with. That's why we call it a killer whale.
>
> (Kenny continues to walk back and forth across the girls' picture then returns to his own.)

In turn 1 Kenny initiated the cross-gender interaction with an example of the boys' competitive discourse in which he compared the boys' whale to the girls' whale claiming the boys' was superior. What's more, it was a killer whale, a *powerful* whale. When Jenny replied in turn 2 that the girls' whale was a baby beluga, one type of whale they had been studying, John supported Kenny's comment in turn 3 that the boys' whale was superior by inferring that they would never even consider making a *baby* whale, babies presumably being associated with girls and powerlessness. In response, Jenny changed the identity of the whale to a mama in turn 4, perhaps believing a mama whale had more status. This failed to impress Alan who in turn 5 managed in three sentences to: 1) further construct the boys' whale and the boys, as superior, "Ours is definitely better";]2) display the

boys and their whale as powerful, ". . . all these things are used to kill with. That's why we call it a killer whale"; and 3) display his personal competence and knowledge about whales, "I know where the spouts go." All three -superiority, power, and ability--were components of the boys' gender ideology.

This interaction indicated that the children entered kindergarten with certain stereotypical gender concepts in place. Not all of the children had the exact same notions, but they were close enough that after only a few days these boys were able to work together to jointly construct themselves as superior, knowledgeable, and powerful in relation to the girls. They also constructed their whale as superior to the girls' whale not because it was artistically more pleasing, but because it, too, was more powerful. Better became equated with power and control. The girls in this instance became constructed as inferior and powerless both as a result of the boys' discourse and their own participation in the event. This form of competition was not a common feature of the girls' gender discourse, they may have been less familiar with this style of interaction, or may have felt they had nothing to gain in the eyes of the other girls by engaging in it.

Girls were often faced with the dilemma, that in order to participate in class discussions or to resist the boys' construction of them, they had to participate in the boys' style of discourse:

> As is evident in research dealing with classroom climate and interaction, academic success for girls in the traditional classroom structure seems to require, in effect, that they "act like boys" [Fine, 1997]. Writes Michelle Foster, 'Most of what occurs in traditional classrooms encourages competitive behavior and individual achievement.' Attempts to treat girls the same as other individuals places them at an educational disadvantage if their school values a competitive ethos and if these girls have internalized the idea that girls shouldn't demonstrate competitive or aggressive behavior. The classroom status quo, while it doesn't embody an intentional bias against girls, nevertheless prizes values that still conflict with many girls' perceptions of appropriate feminine behavior (AAUW, 1999, p. 65).

Summary: Construction of Gender

While not always engaged in constructing gender relations and gender meanings, the children in this classroom attended to gender consistently throughout

the year. Mrs. Ryan overtly presented her ideology which discouraged segregation, exclusion, and differential practices based on cultural gender constructions. The children also presented their ideology of gender by assuming that their gender practices were natural. The Spanish bilingual children participated in this construction which was consonant with their own cultural gender expectations.

From the perspective of the developmental literature, this inclination might well be accepted as normal gender role development. However, when viewed from the perspective of power negotiations, it can be seen that boys were actively creating distance between themselves and the girls not only to distinguish male from female, but to construct themselves as better than, and superior to the girls. These practices had consequences for all the children and restricted the identities that they were able to construct in the classroom. Clearly, the children's inclinations toward gender segregation limited their choices of friends and potential interaction. It also constrained the types of events in which they chose to engage and, as a result, their experience and knowledge. Gender identities were constructed that resulted in girls being less visible, less vocal, less powerful. Comparing girls to boys and finding them lacking was consonant with the dominant cultural gender discourse (AAUW, 1999). Boys were wary of things female lest they be wrongly associated with the inferior girls. This behavior also limited their choices. These beliefs placed the Spanish bilingual boys in the position of having to compete with the native English speakers, often unsuccessfully. It left the Spanish bilingual girls in the position of being both bilingual and female, neither holding much status in the school environment.

Friendship

Broad Level Analysis: Friendship Literature

Like the gender literature, the literature on children's friendships has been highly influenced by psychological theory which focuses on the psychological, cognitive, linguistic, emotional, and social development of the individual. Friendships are often described as highly developed interpersonal relationships which pass through a series of near-universal stages which have defining parameters (Bigelow, 1977; Hartup, 1992; Selman, 1981). Children who do not form friendships are viewed as "at risk" for future endeavors (Asher & Coie, 1990; Ginsberg, Gottman, & Parker, 1986). In these cases interventions and therapies are often prescribed (Schneider, Rubin, & Ledingham, 1985).

An alternative conceptualization of friendship is provided in a small corpus of sociologically oriented observational and ethnographic studies which examine interaction in peer culture and the social construction and meaning of children's friendships within this cultural context (Corsaro, 1985, 1994; Corsaro & Eder, 1990; Davies, 1982; Deegan, 1996; Elgas et al., 1988; Rizzo, 1989; Schofield, 1981). In this work, children are seen as active participants in the construction of their social worlds where they make meaning and learn from interaction within cultural contexts (Corsaro, 1985). The burden of friendship rests not solely on the shoulders of individual children, but becomes part of the process of social interaction, which operates and acquires meaning within specific sociocultural and sociopolitical contexts. Friendship is viewed not only as a developmental phenomenon but as a social and cultural construct. Rizzo (1989) sees friendship as a social phenomenon ". . . its meaning being negotiated through social interaction and then displayed via socially prescribed actions" (p. 71). Deegan (1996), who conducted an ethnographic study of children's friendships in culturally diverse classrooms believes that ". . . children negotiate their friendships against

backclothes of unique and contingent 'mixes' of contextual dissonances related to race, ethnicity, gender, class, community, disability and an array of continually changing life situational sociocultural factors" (p. 6). Thus, access to friendships and the identity of friend are influenced by local power dynamics.

While not denying the developmental aspects of friendships, the current study focuses on the meaning and salience of friendships within a specific sociocultural context and the implications of this construct for second language learners. From this perspective friendships are not considered as universally defined relationships that serve simply as contexts for personal growth, but as the result of social processes among participants who ascribe particular meaning to the construct. The meaning and salience of friendship may vary from context to context and have underlying power dynamics.

Mid-level Analysis: Local Ideologies, Meanings, and Practices

Unlike the policies and programs that addressed bilingualism and gender at the study site, little formal attention was given to the meaning or implications of children's friendships at state and local levels. The primary responsibility of the schools was seen as academic. As a result, there was little formal discussion of institutional or individual ideologies of friendship and their significance within the school setting.

At a classroom level, teachers were often aware of the centrality of friendship in their students' lives. Teachers' management and placement decisions sometimes considered children's friendships as much as they did academic ability. The significance of children's friendships was not lost on many parents either, and it was sometimes a topic of conversation at parent conferences, though of secondary importance to academics. Parents and teachers generally assumed that friendship was a developmental relationship contingent on individual children's mastery of specific social skills. How friendship was defined and displayed and

how children became positioned within these settings were usually not components of these discussions.

Mrs. Ryan's ideology of friendship was closely tied to her multicultural ideology which emphasized the long range vision of a harmonious and just society. Mrs. Ryan believed that respect and interpersonal relationships were keys to achieving this goal. She believed that if people truly cared about each other across boundaries such as race, gender, age, language, and religion, social change was possible.

One basic tenet in her ideology of friendship was that everyone was defined as a "friend." She was their friend, they were her friends, and they were all each other's friends. She referred to her aide, Ms. Díaz, as her friend. Her definition was all-inclusive and she elicited this definition often during whole group activities. Mrs. Ryan worked constantly to increase the number and variety of relationships that her students had with each other and with other children and adults in the school. At faculty meetings she challenged all teachers to examine the diversity of their personal relationships and believed that we all had a responsibility to expand our personal and professional relationships beyond our own racial, linguistic, and religious affiliations.

Another component of her classroom ideology of friendship was that Mrs. Ryan believed that developing relationships required time and consistent contact among different people. This was one of her frustrations with the TBE and ESL pull-out programs. She felt they separated children and reduced their opportunities to make friends in the classroom. Furthermore, she knew that many of the Spanish bilingual children did not have access to the time outside of school that other children in the classroom used for building classroom friendships.

The children in Mrs. Ryan's kindergarten had an equally intense interest in friends and friendship, but it contrasted with Mrs. Ryan's ideology in some very

basic ways. Like Mrs. Ryan, the children believed that having friends was good and desirable. And although it was clear that the children liked Mrs. Ryan and worked very hard to please her, from the children's ideological perspective adults did not fit into the category of personal friends. Children did not name or refer to adults as their friends without Mrs. Ryan's prompting and never talked about playing with adults or visiting adults as they did about their peers.

Being publicly associated with one or more friends in the classroom gave the children status in the eyes of their peers. As a result, some children claimed to have numerous friends. Claiming to have many friends or being defined generally as everyone's friend, however, did not hold the same weight nor have the same influence as being in close relationships with particular children who behaved in particular ways. This belief was reminiscent of how being married is more highly valued than being single in some contexts. Thus, it was the intimate reciprocal relationships toward which many of the children aspired. Friendships carried status in this environment and opened doors to interaction and positive identity construction.

By the fourth week of school there were 10 pairs or triads of these well-established, publicly recognized friends. Some were initiated or cultivated at school others outside of school. Many of these friendships that were in place within the first few weeks of school remained constant for the duration of the year. Overall, the children valued stability in their relationships.

These specific friendships were displayed verbally and non-verbally throughout the year and across events. Friends monitored and kept track of each other while at the same time announcing to everyone else that they were doing so. When children outside the relationship attempted to participate in these behaviors, they were not always well received. These friendships were

overwhelmingly same-gender peers indicating that the children's gender ideology affected their friendship ideology.

Micro Level: Classroom Interaction

The following transcript illustrates the differing teacher and student ideologies of friendship. Mrs. Ryan asked the children to gather at the base of a small white board where she had written them a message. True to their gender ideology, the boys gathered at her feet. The girls clustered behind them with one pair of girls off to the side. Several pairs of close friends were next to each other. Mrs. Ryan read the first sentence of the message with them:

> 1 Mrs. Ryan: Let's see how many words you know. "Good Morning Friends." Who are my friends?
>
> (All the children raise their hands. Some are looking around to see whose hands are raised.)
>
> 2 Mrs. Ryan: Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you.
>
> (As she says thank you she nods to each student.)
>
> 3 Mrs. Ryan: I am your friend.
>
> (She raises her hand as they had done to show that she is their friend.)

Here, Mrs. Ryan was constructing a definition of friend that included everyone and defined her relationship with the children as that of a "friend." She continued:

> 4 Mrs. Ryan: Who else is your friend in this room?

I believe, based on her follow-up comments, that when she asked this question Mrs. Ryan intended to include the other adults in the room in her definition of friendship. However, the children interpreted it to mean who were their personal friends and they began to point to or touch specific children, adults not fitting into their definition of friend. As a result, close friends identified each other and some children pointed to the children they wanted to be associated with. No one pointed

to the Spanish bilingual children although three of the Spanish bilingual students pointed to English dominant children. Mrs. Ryan followed this question by directing the children to the adults:

5 Mrs. Ryan: Good. Is Ms. Díaz one of your friends?

6 Class: Yes.

7 Mrs. Ryan: Is Ms. Hansen one of your friends?

8 Class: Yeah.

9 Mrs. Ryan: Is everybody in here a friend?

10 Class: Yeah.

(Alice and Mike enter the classroom after running an errand. They sit in the back of the room with the girls.)

11 Mrs. Ryan: Is Alice . . .

12 Class: Yeah.

13 Francisco: Mike!

14 Dalbert: Alan!

15 Mrs. Ryan: Is Mike one of your friends?

16 Class: Yes.

17 Dalbert: Mrs. Ryan?

18 Mrs. Ryan: Yes.

19 Dalbert: My friends are Alan and John.

20 Mrs. Ryan: All right, then we can read it. Come on.

(Slowly, Mike, who had been sitting in the back of the class with Alice begins to scoot next to Dalbert, way from the group of girls where he had been sitting when he entered the room mid-way through the event.)

Mrs. Ryan promoted her inclusive definition of friendship as including everyone, even the adults. Everyone had the identity of friend. The children went along with this definition through their choral response but also persisted in identifying specific children as their personal or desired friends. They did this by

sitting next to them, pointing to them, touching them, putting their arms around them, and calling out their names during the lesson as Francisco and Dalbert did in turns 13 and 14. Dalbert, a Spanish bilingual child, went one step further and requested official recognition from Mrs. Ryan by calling out her name in turn 17, and then announcing "My friends are Alan and John" in turn 19. Neither Alan nor John had pointed to Dalbert nor was he publicly associated with Alan or John. Both Alan and John had other best friends in the class. However, Dalbert had chosen to publicly align himself with them and claim the identity of friend probably because they had status in the classroom as coveted friends. And, as was typical, boys aligned themselves with boys and boys dominated the public discussion by calling out and being recognized. Children who were never named or identified by others did not have access to this status or to public identities as desirable friends in these contexts.

The Spanish bilingual children were aware of the importance of friendships in the classroom and participated in the discourse as can be seen by Dalbert and Francisco's contributions in this transcript. They were also more open to friendships with native English speakers than vice versa. The native English speaking children did not seek out the bilingual children in the same way that the Spanish bilingual children made overtures to the native English speaking children. In the second language acquisition literature this is sometimes attributed to children's lack of English proficiency (Tabors, 1987). ESL students can not form friendships, it is argued, because they do not yet have the necessary language. However, the children in this study did have adequate English and the child with the least degree of English at the beginning of the year was the most successful in making friends. An alternative explanation is tied to the nature of the interactive context, the children's status as Spanish speakers, and the status of this identity in the classroom.

Willett (1987), for example, in a year long ethnography of first grade students in the US, described an environment where multilingualism was common, the population was in constant flux, all students were more open to friendships, and non-English speakers were highly desired friends. In this context, second language learners were able to construct high-status identities among their peers within the classroom regardless of their inability to communicate fluently in English. In another study, Woolard (1997) observed that teenage girls in Spain drew on a bilingual identity to attract teenage boys. In these two contexts bilingual identities were advantageous and held status, indicating that individual personality traits and language proficiency alone do not account for the complexity of interaction in local settings.

There were several other contextual features that contributed to friendship formation as well. Many of the kindergarten friendships had been formed in preschool or in the children's neighborhoods and were in place at the beginning of the year making these students less available to new relationships. Other relationships formed early on and were stable throughout the year. The Spanish bilingual children also had less contact time with the other kindergarten children. This was partly due to where they lived and the fact that they rode different buses. The TBE students were drawn from the entire school district and bussed to River Valley School unlike the other students who all lived in the immediate River Valley School district. In addition, the Spanish bilingual children did not share after school activities with native English speaking children and were pulled out of the classroom for part of the day due to the TBE /ESL program model. Furthermore, Latino cultural practices emphasized family relationships over friend relationships and the Spanish bilingual children were often involved with their families on weekends and after school. There was also little parental communication outside of school between the Latino and native English speaking parents. This may have been

due to language, race, socioeconomics, transportation, and/or housing. Lastly, the children's gender ideology which discouraged cross gender friends, drastically inhibited and reduced the number of potential friends to same gender peers.

Summary: Construction of Friendship

Who was able to claim the identity of "friend" was not totally reliant on individual children's English language proficiency, social skills, or personality. A number of contextual features including the local construction of bilingualism, the local construction of gender, the local construction of friendship, the openness of native English speakers to new relationships, and contact time affected who had access to friend relationships and friend identities. Those who could, displayed these identities during public events. Those who could not, might claim to have many friends but were unable to display the behaviors that were indicative of specific friend relationships in this setting.

Consequences and Implications of the Meanings of Bilingualism, Gender, and Friendship for Second Language Learners

The Spanish bilingual children were positioned by the local meanings of bilingualism, gender, and friendship. How students were positioned by these meanings and how their identities were constructed in relation to these meanings have implications for: 1) their participation and investment in school; 2) their access to interaction, knowledge, and power; and 3) their motivation to maintain their bilingualism.

In spite of the efforts of classroom and TBE teachers, bilingualism for the native Spanish speakers was not highly valued and had little status in this setting. The goal of state mandated bilingual programs was to transition Spanish dominant students into mainstream English programs as quickly as possible at the expense of their Spanish, if necessary. Spanish proficiency for native Spanish speakers was not seen as a resource or valuable commodity, but rather as a stepping stone to English proficiency. Bilingualism was not encouraged at an institutional level for

any of the children, regardless of their first language. Although Mrs. Ryan worked diligently toward a positive construction of bilingualism in her kindergarten classroom her ideology was not shared by the English dominant children. The English dominant students took some interest in learning Spanish in adult led situations, but did not transfer this interest to the peer group. The Spanish bilingual children were not blatantly shunned or ridiculed, but they were not often sought-out by English dominant children nor were they an integral part of the classroom social network.

This study demonstrates that the meanings that are constructed for bilingualism, and the affiliated identities available to bilingual students, are shaped by dominant discourses and their underlying power dynamics. While multiple language proficiency might be celebrated and encouraged in one context for a specific population, it can be cast as a disadvantage and hindrance in others. It would be naive to think that language alone contributed to the construction of bilingualism. Race, ethnicity, socioeconomics, and historical circumstances contributed to the meaning in this context and could not be easily separated from it. How local programs, practices, and ideologies value and construct the meaning for bilingualism has serious implications for the well-being of second language learners and their success in school.

Research on bilingual populations in English dominant settings indicates that issues of social segregation and feelings of isolation may affect the school success of bilingual students even, and sometimes more, when they are in mainstream English programs (Fernandez & Shu, 1988; Rivera & Nieto, 1993; Gibson, 1987). Feelings of marginalization associated with exclusion, subordinate status, and cultural invisibility were cited by Zanger (1987, 1993) as impeding learning for some students and driving others out of school. Those who stay are often faced with having to accommodate to the dominant culture denying,

repressing, or rejecting their native language and culture in order to be accepted and survive (Nieto, 1999).

The meaning of gender in the classroom also positioned both the Spanish bilingual girls and boys and limited their choices and access to interaction in the classroom. Boys in this classroom worked to construct themselves as capable, knowing, and superior to girls. This construction can have serious consequences for girls. It undermines their self-esteem, reduces their willingness to participate in public cross-gender interaction, mutes their "voice," limits their access to knowledge and academics, and reduces their experience of leadership positions. It compares them to boys and finds them lacking instead of looking at the strengths and skills that girls bring to school (AAUW, 1999). It also curbs the goals girls set for themselves and the options they feel are available to them well beyond their school years (AAUW Report, 1992, 1999; Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Orenstein, 1994; Sadker & Sadker, 1994). These implications, added to the low status and additional demands typical of linguistic and ethnic minority girls (Lee & Sing, 1994), have devastating implications for girls' investment in school. One result is that Latina girls have a higher drop-out rate than any other group of girls (Shnaiberg, 1998). In 1995 30% of Hispanic girls between the ages of 16 and 24 dropped out of school (AAUW, 1999).

Boys in this setting worked to distance themselves from girls and a female construction of gender which they associated with a loss of power. The boys also dominated class discussions. This practice increased their visibility, their access to interaction, power, knowledge, and their influence on the meanings that were constructed in the public arena. They also frequently engaged in a competitive discourse which tied boys' social identities and self-worth to superior ability and status. This competitive focus of being better than someone else in order to construct a positive identity leaves unappealing options those who were unable to

achieve these identities due to their positioning within local contexts, such as girls and the Spanish bilingual boys. Both the Spanish bilingual girls and boys were constrained by the gender ideology operating in the local environment and the limitations these constructions placed on their relationships, school experience, access to knowledge, power, and future success.

Both the classroom teacher and students in this study placed a high value on friendships, but for slightly different reasons. Mrs. Ryan saw relationships as having the potential to affect positive social change. For the children friendships gave them access to the desired identity of friend. Friends, in turn, gave children access to status, interaction, involvement, influence, knowledge, and language. In an interview toward the end of the year, Mrs. Ryan voiced concerns about five of the six Spanish bilingual children when asked about their friendships. She noted how these five children did not have consistent publicly recognized friends. Cultural differences, family issues, and individual social development could all have played a part in the children's access to social relationships. Equally important, however, were the contextual constraints such as consistent time in the kindergarten classroom; the status and identities that the children were and were not able to assume; and the children's positions within the community, school, and classroom.

Since bilingual children benefit from both native language instruction and social integration with English speaking peers, the question becomes how to balance social and academic needs. This study in no way suggests dismantling bilingual programs. There is ample evidence to indicate that second language learners who receive bilingual education, which affirms their bilingual and bicultural identities and supports academic achievement, are more likely to stay in school and succeed (Frau-Ramos & Nieto, 1993; Nieto, 1992).

However, the implications of a school career in which positive social identities are difficult to attain are great. The significance of identity construction and the social environment is underscored by Cummins (1996) who believes that ". . . human relationships are at the heart of schooling. The interactions that take place between students and teachers and among students are more central to student success than any method for teaching literacy, or science or math" (p. 1) and have fundamental consequences for students' success. Positive identity construction can motivate a student to engage in learning. Devaluing of identity can provide the impetus for dropping out. This message is endorsed by Genesee (1994) who states that "Educating second language children has been kept separate from issues concerning their social integration in mainstream classrooms and the school at large" (p. 2). His position is that academics are not enough, attention to social integration is critical.

Even in light of the meanings that were constructed for bilingualism, gender, and friendship at this study site, it is important to point out, that the Spanish bilingual kindergarteners in this study were very invested in the kindergarten program in spite of their positioning there. Ms. Díaz reported that in other kindergartens where she had taught, the Spanish bilingual children faced even greater struggles forming social relationships with the English speaking children and attaining status in the classroom. The support the children in this study received from their classroom teacher, classroom aide, and TBE teacher in negotiating the constructions of bilingualism, gender, and friendship in the local context most likely mediated the children's experience. How long they are willing to struggle in the face of these constructions in less supportive settings is unknown. How students' identities and social relationships are constructed depends on where they are and what is valued there as much as who they are. In light of these findings it becomes necessary to examine the dynamics of the local sociopolitical contexts in

which these students are educated. Second language proficiency alone does not insure success in local environments nor does it automatically support the formation of social relationships and positive social identities. In order to take this complexity into account, theories of second language acquisition and local programs need to move beyond a focus on the individual.

The programs and learning contexts available to bilingual students vary greatly and there are few universal solutions that can be applied across the board. What can be considered in all situations, however, is the nature of the relationship between mainstream and minority populations at any given site. Which ideologies and discourses do these relationships reflect? What are the dominant institutional practices and who do they serve? Which identities are available to which students? How do these identities affect students' access to interaction, learning, power and relationships? How can they be renegotiated to give all children access to social and academic resources? This may involve examining, renegotiating, and reconstructing ideologies and power relationships and practices at local levels to allow alternative discourses to be heard and valued in order to support a diverse population of students.

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